

## ***The Essence of Ham Radio - III Hobby Happy Hams!***

Ham radio operators very often use their wireless communication devices for fun. They maintain a very high degree of professional standard in terms of operating skill, discipline and technology. In fact there is a continuing debate on what the activities carried out by radio amateurs should be called. Some radio amateurs complain that the term 'ham radio' is derogatory, and some even object to it being called 'amateurs' on the ground that this may be taken to imply 'less skillful'! But in fact their communication system is of more than the professional standard. Unlike the governmental communications, a ham radio operator may not have any specific message to pass on to his fellow ham, yet he enjoys contacting his ham radio friends from all around the world. A typical conversation may be limited to just exchanging of 'signal report' with information about the 'working condition' (the type of wireless equipment and antenna systems being used), about the location and the weather conditions etc. When the friendship grows after making regular radio contacts, they may start talking just about anything under the sun! Of course a ham radio operator cannot talk 'business', transmit messages like the reproduction of a

Code for a Ham Radio Operator: **(1)** The ham is considerate. She/he never knowingly uses the air (radio waves) in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others; **(2)** The ham is loyal. She/he offers her/his loyalty, encouragement and support to his fellow hams, her/his local clubs; **(3)** The ham is progressive. She/he keeps her/his station (radio equipment) abreast of science. It is well built and efficient. Her/his operating practice is above reproach; **(4)** The ham is friendly. She/he sends friendly advice and counsel to the beginner, assistance, co-operation and being considerates for the interests of others'; these mark the ham spirit; **(5)** The ham is balanced. Radio is her/his hobby. She/he never allows it to interfere with any of her/his duties she/he owes to her/his home, her/his job, her/his school or community-and lastly her/his knowledge and her/his radio station are always ready for the service of her/his country and her/his community; **(6)** A ham is patriotic. Her/his amateur radio station and skill is always ready for service to her/his country and community.

### **Call-sign**

The 'call-sign' is the unique identification of a particular wireless station. The ships, vessels and aircrafts (which are mobile) are identified by their unique *call-signs*. So do the ham radio stations. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU, Geneva) is the international authority which allocates *call-sign* prefixes to all the different type of radio communication services. For example, the prefix *T94* is allocated to ham radio stations located in Bosnia-Herzegovina. For Indian ham radio stations, the prefix may be *VU2* or *VU3*. For Andaman & Nicobar Island (India), the prefix is *VU7* and so on. A typical complete *call-sign* of a particular ham radio station may look like, say, *T94VA*. This *call-sign* belongs to a person located in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

### **Call-sign hunting**

Hunting for the exotic and rare *call-signs* is another thrilling part of this hobby. Because, a ham radio station once listened or contacted may not be heard or contacted again for long or never! Ham radio operators exchange 'acknowledgment cards' (Known as 'QSL' Cards) as a proof of their radio contact. Those from distant and hard to get places are the rare QSL cards, and may achieve an almost 'philatelic' value in a particular area. There are some *call-signs* which may look exotic. For example *LY750BE* is a special *call-sign* from Lithuania. This *call-sign* belonged to *LY3BE* who once operated his ham radio station to celebrate the 750th anniversary of Klaipeda city in Lithuania. A ham radio operator can obtain a special *call-sign* from the communications authority if she/he wants to operate radio station to mark a special event (e.g. to celebrate say Marconi's birthday!). It gives an opportunity to contact rare stations from around the world within a short period of time. Hundreds of stations may chase after a special station. This is a thrilling and challenging task for the special station to handle such an enormous amount of traffic (the *pile-up*) at a single point of time. It also demonstrates the operating skill of a ham radio operator. Hams have been contributing greatly to the art of radio communication.

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**(a ham radio hobbyist with the call-sign VU2MUE)**

**Homepage: <http://www.qsl.net/vu2msy>**



*A QSL card from the custodian of the Marconi Memorial Amateur Radio Club Station Mr. Robert J Doherty (Lakeville, USA) sent to VU2NCT club station of NCSTC & Vigyan Prasar as a proof of our radio contact on Morse Code.*

broadcast programme of entertainment value or music. A ham radio operator cannot give false or misleading calls or signals, news, advertisements, statements on topics of political or industrial controversy etc. A ham radio operator is forbidden to transmit superfluous signals or any matter which is indecent or of obscene character or of a seditious tendency or which is grossly offensive or such as is likely to arouse racial, religious or communal animosity.

'Rag-Chewing' (talking endlessly) is a favorite pastime of many ham radio operators. They can talk for hours on any subject but have to identify themselves every 'ten minutes' with the 'call-sign' allotted to them by the government. Those who don't want to talk can just *eves-drop* (listen to others' conversation) and enjoy the conversation! Ham radio operators follow certain codes devised by Paul M. Segal. It is assumed that every responsible ham radio operator is aware about these codes.